

PRESTIGE

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

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FOCUS ON

BELLA TOLA HISTORIC HÔTEL...

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Time For Some Flowers



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Christmas Gifts

Bella Tola: the discrete elegance of an historic hotel in the heart of Swiss Valais

We head for Val d'Anniviers, on the heights of the village of Saint-Luc, to Bella Tola, the region's oldest hotel. The four-star Bella Tola, a member of Historic Hotels of Europe, is an ideal base for a summer escape to the mountains amongst the beauty of the great outdoors.

Staying at Bella Tola is a privilege: this is a welcoming guesthouse with real character. If you love cutting-edge design and the latest hotspots then keep on walking. There are no department stores in this village of 200 people, only the wonders of nature to admire and the imposing silence of the Alps: the "Imperial Crown" with the Matterhorn. This 32-room hotel, which was built in 1859, is worth visiting for its spectacular location alone, which overlooks the whole valley. Anne-Françoise and Claude Buchs became the owners in 1996, following on from four generations of the winemaking Pont family. The Buchs put their heart and soul into making your stay an unforgettable experience. They have maintained the spirit of the original property whilst creating a stylish and cozy interior.

Our wonderful hostess Anne-Françoise Buchs enjoys telling the story of Pierre Pont. He opened the village's first hotel in his family home at the request of the parish priest – we can see the commemorative plaque – before building the current Bella Tola in 1883: an incredible challenge! That takes us back to a time when an English lady, who became a regular at the hotel, was carried around in a sedan chair. The British nobility pioneered summer tourism in the Alps. Then came the golden age of the skiing seasons with the development of ski lifts from the 1960s onwards.

Here nature is on your doorstep in a picture-postcard setting! What is there to do? Laze in a deckchair, relax in the comfortable lounge or read in the library. There's no danger of being bored. There are several hiking trails in the area, or you could try your hand at picking Alpine plants with the expert guidance of an herbalist, or go on geological walks. Before staying at Bella Tola, the more energetic amongst you could even join the Val d'Anniviers walking tour from mid-June to October. For shopping addicts, Crans-Montana isn't very far away... And as for wellness, the "L'Eau des Cimes" spa with indoor swimming pool is a must. The beauty treatments include a package combining a steam bath, scrub, Moiry glacier mud wrap and flower pouch massage, all of which are homemade!



Quand l'art d'offrir est pris au pied de la lettre! Lire la suite...

Elite Model: La Finale



Voici les résultats du concours Elide Model. Lire la suite...

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Among the picturesque neighboring villages, don't miss Chandolin where explorer Ella Maillart spent the last years of her life. A small museum retraces her life, including her expeditions to Asia... If you're interested in architecture, you can become an expert on granaries and raccards, the buildings on stilts that local people used to store their valuables and more importantly to keep their provisions away from rodents. Admire the larch chalets. Most have now been converted into homes, but once upon a time local people who made their living from their vines and cattle spent part of the winter here before the transhumance. Entire families then migrated, putting all their belongings on the back of a mule to move into what we call the mayen, built out of old larch beams, in May. A symbol of the past seasonal migration, this high-mountain chalet is now the ultimate spot for a short break. If the adventure tempts you, the Buchs offer four-night breaks in a stunning mayen a ninety-minute walk from the hotel, and even deliver picnic baskets.

At Bella Tola, fine food hasn't been forgotten with the Breton chef Goulven Tournel, whose cuisine you can try on the veranda of Chez Ida. For Alpine specialties, opt for Le Tzambron and its log fire. Finally, be sure to try local wines from Siere Valley (Cornalin and Humagne Rouge). Combining wellness and the good life, Bella Tola is sure to please anyone who is looking for an authentic home from home. There aren't many left!

By Florence Batisse Pichet

For accommodation:

Hotel Bella Tola, 3961 St-Luc, Switzerland

www.bellatola.ch bellatola@bluewin.ch – +41 27 475 1444

Seasonal rates: from €180 to €323 for a double room with buffet breakfast, access to the spa and swimming pool.

To prepare your stay:

Valais/Wallis Promotion: 1950 Sion, Valais, Switzerland – +41 27 327

3590 – info@valais.ch – www.valais.ch

Sierre-Anniviers Tourism: 3960 Sierre, Valais, Switzerland – +41 848 884 027 – info@sierre-anniviers.ch – www.sierre-anniviers.ch

Access:

By train: Paris–Geneva by TGV Lyria then connection to Sierre (around thirty minutes travel time). A shuttle bus can be booked with the hotel.